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EPA Environmental News

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EPA, Hawaii Dept. of Health, U.S. Navy and the Defense Logistics Agency reach agreement for improvements to Storage Tanks at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility

HONOLULU – Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Hawaii Department of Health (HDOH) are announcing an agreement with the U.S. Navy and the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) for actions to be performed by the Navy and DLA in response to a January 2014 fuel release, including measures to minimize the threat of future releases in connection with tanks at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility near Pearl Harbor, Oahu.

"This agreement will ensure Oahu's drinking water supply is protected, while allowing the Navy and DLA continued use of the Red Hill facility and the strategic resource it provides for our national defense," said Jared Blumenfeld, EPA's Regional Administrator for the Pacific Southwest. "We and the Department of Health look forward to continued work with the Navy and DLA on this long term effort towards protecting the public's health and the environment."

The agreement, an Administrative Order on Consent (AOC), requires the Navy and DLA to evaluate and implement the best practicable fuel release prevention technologies and detection methods for the tanks at the Red Hill facility, including upgrades to all of the bulk fuel storage tanks at the Red Hill facility. The AOC also requires the Navy and DLA to conduct an updated analysis of the hydrogeology of the area surrounding the Red Hill facility, study the extent of contamination caused by previous fuel releases, evaluate potential remediation methods and implementation of such methods, and assess the risk the Red Hill facility poses to the Oahu drinking water resources in the area, all within the next two years. All work to be performed by the Navy and DLA will be developed in consultation with and subject to the approval of the EPA and HDOH.

The implementation and extent of future remediation work will depend on the methods determined best suited for the conditions found at the site. An initial evaluation of tank upgrade alternatives will occur within the first two years of the AOC, and re-evaluations will occur at least once every five years thereafter. All in-use tanks will be evaluated and upgraded on a rolling basis within no more than ~~approximately 20~~ 25 years after the initial evaluation is completed. After the final deadline, any tanks that have not been upgraded can no longer be used to store regulated substances such as petroleum products.

Commented [RM1]: This seems vague to me. Can we say "within no more than 25 years"? (Can we say that many tanks (or most) will be upgraded sooner than that? Maybe not.) Finally, rather than "after the final deadline," can we say "after 25 years"?

In addition, the AOC provides for the installation of additional groundwater monitoring wells in areas between the Red Hill facility and the Honolulu Board of Water Supply's drinking water wells. Upon the completion of hydrogeological modeling of the area surrounding the Red Hill facility, additional groundwater monitoring well locations will be identified.

The AOC also imposes specific schedules in which the Navy and DLA must complete ~~various tasks~~the wWork. The Navy and DLA are subject to monetary penalties in the event they do not conduct the Work in accordance with the requirements of the AOC.

HDOH QUOTE:

In January 2014, in the course of refilling Tank 5 following its service life extension renovation work, the Navy identified a release of JP-8 jet fuel from the tank and reported the release to the HDOH with the estimated fuel loss of up to 27,000 gallons. The Navy drained the tank and collected samples from existing monitoring wells. Results taken in and around Tank 5, indicated a spike in levels of hydrocarbons in soil vapor and groundwater. Following the January 2014 release, Navy increased the frequency of monitoring and performed additional monitoring of Navy Well 2254-01 and shall continue to monitor Navy Well 2254-01 in accordance with the Groundwater Protection Plan approved by DOH and that will be updated as part of the AOC. Current drinking water monitoring results confirmed compliance with federal and state Maximum Contaminant Levels for drinking water both before and after the January 2014 release.

The Red Hill facility was constructed and became operational in the 1940s and includes 20 field-constructed steel underground bulk fuel storage tanks. The tanks are constructed of steel, encased by an estimated minimum of 2.5 to 4 feet of concrete surrounded and supported by basalt bedrock. Each tank has a fuel storage capacity ranging from approximately 12.5 to 12.7 million gallons for a total of approximately 250 million gallons of fuel. There are 18 tanks that are currently active, and two which are presently not in use.

EPA, HDOH, Navy and DLA are offering the public a 30 day opportunity to provide comments on the agreement. There will also be a public meeting [insert info regarding meeting]. For more information and to submit comments please visit: [WEBSITE].

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